



WHAT DO THOSE WINTER WARNINGS REALLY MEAN?

V Corps Safety Office release

When extreme winter weather begins sweeping across Europe, as it often does, many people reach for their computer mice, their TV remote controls or their radio dials to find out what the word is on whether the weather will affect their day.

When that happens, the experts might use a variety of expressions to describe what's going on in the sky and on the ground. Here are some helpful definitions to decipher what may seem like meteorological mumbo-jumbo:

A blizzard is considerable falling and blowing snow; strong winds of 35 miles per hour or more, and visibility of a quarter mile or less. These conditions are expected to persist for more than three hours.

A severe blizzard is considerable falling and blowing snow, winds of 45 miles per hour or more; visibility near zero, and temperatures of 10 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. This term is used when these conditions are expected to persist for more than three hours.

A winter storm watch is issued when conditions are favorable for the development of a blizzard, heavy snow, or significant accumulations of freezing rain or sleet.

A winter storm warning is issued when significant accumulations of snow, freezing rain or sleet are expected very soon or are occurring in the area.

Heavy Snow is defined as snowfall that is expected to accumulate to six inches deep or more in 12 hours, or eight inches or more in 24 hours.

A high wind warning is issued when sustained winds of 40 miles per hour or greater for a significant period of time, or wind gusts to 58 miles per hour or greater (regardless of duration) are occurring or expected.

Weather advisories are used to highlight events that are significant to the public but not necessarily a serious threat to life or property to warrant a warning. The following are some type of advisories:

Snow advisory: Issued when one to five inches of new snow are expected. Snow may result in slippery and hazardous roads.

Blowing and drifting snow advisory: Issued when visibility is, or is expected to be, at or below a quarter mile due to blowing or drifting snow.

Freezing drizzle or freezing rain advisory: Issued when an accumulation of ice from freezing drizzle or rain that can make road surfaces and sidewalks hazardous is occurring or expected.

Wind chill advisory: Issued when dangerous wind chill values of 30 to 35 degrees below zero or lower are occurring or expected.

Dense fog advisory: Issued when fog with widespread fog lowers visibility to a quarter mile or less is occurring or is expected.

Frost or freeze advisory: Issued when frost or freezing temperatures are expected.

